FEBRUARY WEATHER AND CROPS.

A radio talk by J. B. Kincer, Weather Bureau, delivered through WRC and 39 other radio stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, March 4, 1931.

---oOo---

How-do-you-do, friends. The weather always has had a reputation of affording convenient material for conversation, but during the last twelve months it appears to have delighted in behavior so unusual as to demand almost constant attention.

At this the closing of the winter season, and the beginning of spring, you may be interested in just what has happened in the way of weather since last fall. It isn't necessary for me to say that the winter has been mild, for you know that already, but there are certain features to the unusual mildness that may be of interest. If we consider a north-south cross-section through the central part of the country from, say, norther North Dakota to the coast of Texas, we find a gradual increase in the average winter temperature from about 6° above zero in northern North Dakota to 55° above at the coast. Obviously, then, when the winter is warmer than normal, the place in which we happen to live, from the standpoint of climate, is temporarily displaced southward, and the amount of this displacement affords an interesting indication of the mildness. If you live, for example, at Havre, Montana, you spent this last winter, climatically, at Kansas City, Missouri, and if at Kansas City, you were climatically, in Oklahoma City. If you live at St. Paul, you had central Illinois weather, and if at St. Louis, you spent the winter in Tennessee. Des Moines had south-central Missouri temperatures, while you of Chicago spent the winter, climatically, at Cincinnati.

The winter was somewhat cooler than normal in the Great Basin of the West, and in the Southeastern States, while the temperature averaged near normal in the Northeast, but from the Lake region and western Ohio Valley westward to the Rocky Mountains it was 6° to 17° above normal. Recent winters in the United States have had a marked tendency to abnormal warmth, in fact, ever since the notably cold winter of 1917-1918. For example, ten of the last twelve winters have been warm at Denver and a like number at Kansas City. At Cincinnati eight of the last twelve have been warm, and in Washington, only one of the last dozen winters has had below normal temperature.

The soil moisture situation at this time varies widely in different sections of the country. Following the generous rains of last fall in the South and mid-West, December and January were extremely dry nearly everywhere. The two months combined had the least precipitation of record over large areas of the interior of the country. At St. Louis, for example, it was the driest December and January since records began in 1837, or for nearly 100 years. In February large areas of the droughty sections had good rains, but in some of the more

Over

eastern States there was less than half the normal. In the middle Atlantic area, comprising the Virginias and Maryland, we have now had fifteen consecutive months with deficient precipitation, while in the Ohio Valley many sections have now rounded out a full year with shortages in every month. For the winter, as a whole, precipitation was below normal in all parts of the country, except in the Southwest and locally in the Southeast. Large sections of the interior, especially from the Ohio Valley northwestward, had less than half the normal for the three winter months, while snowfall was much less than normal everywhere, except in the Northeast.

At this time the soil is abundantly supplied with moisture in Arkansas, most of Tennessee, the central Gulf States and Texas, while there is sufficient for present needs in Missouri, Oklahoma, Kansas, and Nebraska. In the lower Mississippi Valley, from Arkansas southward, and in the eastern two-thirds of Texas, it is now too wet for proper working, but vegetation has made good progress. West Virginia and Virginia were materially benefited by recent showers, and additional moisture has been helpful in the south Atlantic area. In the Ohio Valley most sections have sufficient top-soil moisture forthe present, but the sub-soil continues very dry over a large area from the middle Mississippi Valley eastward to the Atlantic Ocean, and heavy rains are badly needed during the next two months. The upper Mississippi Valley, especially Iowa, urgently needs rain, as the lack of water is becoming more serious, while complaints continue of insufficient supplies for domestic and other uses in parts of the upper Ohio Valley.

Vegetation and farm work are well ahead of an average seaon, while early gardens and truck crops are making good growth throughout the Southern States. Some corn has been planted in the South, and a little cotton put in in extreme southern Texas. Early fruit trees are blooming northward to central South Carolina and central Arkansas.
